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A CALIFORNIA OUTING.

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It was the outing fever, and we had it badly — Joe, Fred, and myself, this curious, old-time triangle of friends, held together by ties born of college life and strengthened by years of constant intercourse. We had robbed orchards, cut lectures, had been hazed and had hazed in our turn, belonged to the same fraternity, had gnawed the apple of knowledge, each in his own way and on his own side, until, at least in the eyes of each, the veil had fallen away and the things of time and eternity stood clear; but we never saw them in the same light; we could never agree upon what we saw. The world in epitome we fought, wrangled and argued over, each clinging to his own path of theory as the only road to the high, gray peaks of truth.

When we left college our lives divided on industrial lines as divergent as our college theories. Joe's Greek love for the beautiful led him into the domain of art. Fred was the victim of heredity. The blood of a long line of physicians flowed through his veins, and he was a full-fledged "saw-bones," who, besides his license to kill, held advanced views on the labor question. I was a lawyer.

We were no nearer agreement than before. The eternal verities were a little hazier, time and maturer reflection had somewhat dimmed the glasses of our youthful vision, but

we still fought over the ghosts of what had once been to us living truths. On one point only were we united—love of nature. We hunted, fished, and tramped together. There was not a county of the State that had not seen our camp-fire. We had hunted deer and bear in the Salmon and Trinity Mountains, had fished the upper reaches of the Sacramento and McCloud, had followed the windings of Tuolumne and King's Rivers into that circle of everlasting peaks that lift their heads high and white into the blue, had traversed Yosemite in the spring, when the snow covered it like a pall, when the valley vibrated under the thunder of cataracts, and the air was filled with water-dust shot with rainbows;—and in autumn, when, carpeted with emerald turf and wild flowers and surrounded by vertical granite walls, across whose seamed and broken face its lessened waters waved in airy lace-folds, it seemed a veritable Garden of the Gods. We had trolled for the great lake trout upon the bosom of Tahoe, had scrambled down the gorges of the American and the Yuba, had shot the rapids of Eel River (more dangerous to canvas canoes than the Lachine) through virgin forests to Humboldt Bay, and had whipped every lagoon from Cape Mendocino to Point Concepcion. When we could escape the busy turmoil of life we fled to nature and gathered strength, elasticity, and moral equipoise from her sacred touch. Nor were there wanting the practical elements that go to the perfection of camp-life. Good shots as we were, and as handy with the frying-pan as with the split bamboo, the material man was not allowed to suffer. We killed, cooked, and ate as necessity required—we never slaughtered. When the spirit moved, we would throw our impedimenta—of the most primitive character—upon the backs of a couple of patient pack-horses, and, followed by the dogs, would take up our line of march for other fields—along a trail, if one could be found; if not, over rough and unbroken country, across patches of snow,

under the shadows of the solemn pines; now fighting our way through sun-blistered thickets of chaparral, and now skirting little mountain lakes or traversing flower-studded meadows, trusting to our skill as mountaineers, careless as to where night found us, until, reaching the desired haven, the horses would be staked out, and men and dogs would sprawl in the shade, enjoying a well-earned rest.

Such a spot held us in the summer of—well, never mind the year. Let me reproduce as nearly as possible the characteristics of this typical mountain camp. It may be a "twice-told tale" to most of you; but the story will not, I trust, lose in the telling.

We are at the base of Castle Rocks, at an elevation of some four thousand feet. Immediately behind uprears the massive rampart of the Crag, its sharp granite pinnacles reaching up into the beryl-green of the evening sky, two thousand feet above us. Snow still lies in its crevices, and the hardy fir slowly climbs its steep cañons, while the sinewy, stunted juniper hangs out banners of living green against the gray walls of the inaccessible cliffs. Along its base marches a stately army of pine, fir, and cedar. In front lies the circular basin, some half mile in diameter, of what has once been a mountain lake, but now covered with luxuriant grass, from which peep tender forget-me-nots, bluebells, and pansies, guarded by mountain lilies, white and orange-striped. Beyond the outer rim of the basin the mountain-side falls away, and Shasta towers before us in all the strength of its splendid, white isolation. Black Butte, dwarfed by the contrast, struggles up out of Shasta Valley, which, in the approaching darkness, stretches away purple to the blue of the Siskiyou, beyond which rises the snow-capped peak of Mount Pitt in Southern Oregon. To the south the Sierra Ridge shows a snow mantle, its level broken only by the mighty uplift of Lassen Peak, seventy-five miles away. Down deep in the valley below, the little

town of Sisson sends out a few twinkling lights which, with the distant whistle of a locomotive, tells the tale of jostling, hurrying humanity. Across the mesa on which we are camped a lusty, snow-fed stream hurries. You can see it where it breaks its way through a dark cleft in the rocks far above, racing in white cascades over boulders, tumbling over falls and spreading out in pools of passionless rest, in which the trout are jumping. Here maidenhair and other delicate, graceful ferns are found, and shy orchids, while the air is fragrant with the odors of azalea and ceanothus.

As the nights are chilly at this altitude, and as a further protection against occasional showers or a possible flurry of snow, we have constructed a rude lean-to, the open side of which faces the camp-fire. Near by hangs the carcass of a deer. This, with a basket of trout caught late that afternoon, a side of bacon, a bag of beans (brown, not white), a goodly piece of pressed corned beef (an emergency fund), a bag of coffee, ditto of sugar, ditto of prepared flour, ditto of onions, and ditto of potatoes, constitute our larder. We take regular turns at camp drudgery, and thus minimize friction and annoyance. To-night is Fred's inning; and to hear his objurgation of a recalcitrant fishtail that refuses to be fried, to watch his manipulation of flour and water into the toothsome hoecake, the deft manner in which he peels the succulent potato and slices the fragrant onion, you would imagine that his soul had never soared above the frying-pan and camp-kettle. The coffee-pot boils over. How will you have it—with a dash of cold water to clear it, or, after the manner of the Arab, dregs and all? Dregs and all, by all means. For a thousand years the dweller of the desert has taken his coffee so, and, for solid comfort, his method cannot be improved upon.

"Well," sighs Joe, as he produces his favorite briar-wood, and leans over for the common canister, "it was a hard-fought battle, but it has ended happily, thanks be to

Providence and a sound constitution. I doubt if Rameses ever drove fiercer battle against the Khita. Certainly, the charge at Balaklava was not more splendid in its daring. Did you note the 'to do and die' expression on Fred's face as he tackled that last potato? Had he perished in the attempt, he would have been a martyr to his own good deeds—pickled, as it were, in the brine of his own excellence. If that potato was as underdone as mine, he will outdream Scrooge and stampede the horses."

"You miserable dauber! you unburnt son of burnt umber and raw sienna!" retorts Fred, hurling the dishcloth at his grinning foe. "You fat-witted lump of indolence, do you dare rail at the anointed of labor? But it's the way of the world," he adds reflectively, reaching for the tobacco—and we knew we were in for it—"the toil of one goes to support the idleness and luxury of another. Society, as primitively constructed, was a common union for the common defense. All were workers. There were no drones. Idleness meant starvation. Common equality was the measure of social condition. Under the complex influences of modern civilization a mighty injustice has been worked. The mass become mudsills for the luxurious habitations of the few who toil not, neither do they spin, and yet who out-Solomon Solomon in the magnificent appointments of their dronish existence. Is it a wonder that labor unions are recognized as the only defense against the aggression of capital, that tramps abound, that upheavals occur marked by crime and outrage, and that anarchy dares lift its head against established law? Society, as existing, is but a huge potpie. All its sweetness and strength lie at the bottom. Its upper crust is but a useless ornament, and can be dispensed with without injury. It——"

"Verily," interposes Joe, "Scrooge's potato is beginning its work earlier than I had anticipated."

But agreement with Fred would be breaking the un-

written law of our compact. The cudgels must be taken up, and I lazily bestir myself.

"You talk like a child whose mother's apron-string is the length of his little world. You argue from the unit to the social compact, entirely forgetting that what may be good for the compact may be the undoing of the unit. Society may be as you say, a potpie but, if so, it is constructed in layers. You may turn it upside down and crush the crust, but there will always be a layer of something at the bottom. Society must work on regular lines and under uniform laws, else it is not society, but a disorganized, go-as-you-please, individual scramble. These laws, like those of nature, are inexorable. Look around. This granite is the bedrock whose disintegration has formed the soil from which spring tree and flower. Can the granite rightfully complain of the soil, or the soil of the vegetation, that its presence cuts off sunshine? A convulsion may change the form. The soil may be swept away by the waters that give it life, but the result is always the same. The rock will give new soil, and the new soil new vegetation. So with society. It may be disrupted, and old lines of distinction destroyed. It will reform itself on similar lines. There will always be a mudsill. The fault does not lie with natural law of formation, but in its application by existing ministers to existing forms. There never was a law, divine or human, but was liable to the charge of individual hardship. God, for good reasons, plants in the earth a poisonous flower. The innocent, ignorant child eats of it and dies. Do you impugn the wisdom or goodness of the Almighty? The child was not to blame. It knew no better. The flower, however, was a part and parcel of a general scheme of creation. A thousand people have deposited their earnings in a bank. They are the accumulated savings of years of labor, and are their only defense against indigent old age. The bank fails. The law gives

the depositors recourse against the hundred stockholders of the corporation. The stockholders may be able to meet the bank's liabilities, but it will leave them and their families penniless and homeless. Through the enforcement of the law a hundred men are ruined; but the law was not made for the hundred, but for the thousand. It was framed for the protection of society as a whole."

"But where, O maker of many words, in this social cosmogony do you place individual thought, effort, and freedom? Will you follow the example of the amiable robber of Attica, and stretch man, with all his aspirations and glorious personal possibilities, upon the cast-iron bed of State, under penalty of having his short legs lengthened or his long legs shortened?" queries Fred, scornfully.

"I would place him," I answer, "exactly where he has voluntarily placed himself. When he entered the social compact he surrendered some rights, by no means all. But he did surrender enough to make him amenable to the laws of the compact; and within the limits of that surrender, and no further, is he bound. Outside this restriction his freedom is as unfettered as thought. Now, as to the drones of whom you spoke——"

"One little word," interjects Joe, "before Scrooge's potato blight becomes epidemic. Do not abuse the drone. He is the delight and solace of a work-ridden race. There is not a beehive that does not furnish its quota of laziness, not an ant-hill but boasts its royal family, and not a labor organization but can clothe in purple and fine linen its walking-delegate. Laziness, in my judgment, is the savior of society. It is the reserve fund upon which the body draws to balance its waste of tissue through the unending grind of industrial activity. I am somewhat of a drone myself, and will do battle, in my lazy way, for this lazy fellow, who does not live in vain, even if the sum of his inertia serves but to 'point a moral or adorn a tale,' but

whose mission, like that of the flower or weed, if you will, is to clothe in beauty and grace the waste places of humanity."

The heterodoxy of this outburst is so appalling that for a moment we are dumb. Our little eyrie still holds the light, but long rows of slanting shadows fall across us. Shasta compasses its stately form in bands of fire, and crowns its head with pink and gold clouds. The valley takes on a deeper gloom, through which Sisson throws out more lights. A belated bee drones past, a startled kingfisher wings his flight up stream, a quail calls in the distance. Shasta changes its robe of pink for one of amethyst. The amethyst darkens into purple, and lightens to pearly gray as the moon rises. The camp-fire leaps into life, and the deep tones of Rembrandt dance among the tree-trunks. A silence, born of communion with nature, falls upon our disputatious little party, peevishness and spitefulness fall away like worn-out garments, and the listening soul takes healing from the wings of peace.

A few days later, and we have descended from our eyrie to the banks of the Sacramento. It is a curious thing—but in this region you cannot rid yourself of Shasta's presence. It is with you everywhere. It is not simply a snow-covered mass of stone and earth; it is a living personality, following, confronting, peeping over your shoulder, peering into your affairs, and laying your very soul bare to its awful scrutiny. If you ascend a mountain-top, it looms before you, white, impenetrable, vast; and the higher you go the more it grows, dominating you from its supreme height, questioning you from the summits of immeasurable age—stern, immutable monolith, that lifted its head in flaming wrath when the earth was young, that threw off the rough embraces of the glacier, and watched the first pine and fir commence their weary climb up its fire-riven sides. If you descend into the lowest valley, it searches you out under

the pine or among the azalea and calycanthus, or, from the rippling surface of the pool, laughs at your impotent efforts to escape.

I remember one day that we picked up on the road an old man, ragged, weary, and footsore. He was not of the industrial army, but had tramped from Oregon, and was on his way to Red Bluff, where his married daughter resided. He told us of his wanderings, and in a quiet, awed manner said that, all the way through Shasta Valley and down the Sacramento, the mountain had watched and followed him. "Seemed like it was alive," said he; "and it follered me like the eye of my mother used to foller me when I was a boy, and it kinder comforted me." Poor old man! he certainly needed some one to comfort him. We sent him on his way to the nearest station rejoicing, with enough money in his pocket to pay his way to his daughter's home. And old Shasta smiled a benediction upon his departing figure.

"Here is the place. I've got a fellow staked out here that will make you open your eyes. He's a whale. He rose to me yesterday, but got away, and I've dreamed of him all night."—This from Fred.

It is early morning. The dew is on the grass, the brown thrush is singing in the thicket, the air is laden with the perfume of flowers and balsamic with the odor of pine and fir; a fine blue haze fills the upward sweep of the cañon, and the hilltops are ruddy with the glow of the rising sun. The bracing air sends the blood tingling through your veins, and you feel glad that you are alive and able to be there. Fifty feet away, across the pool whose surface is now striped with ragged bars of dancing sunlight, the water swirls and eddies around a half-submerged rock. Upon this spot Fred has his eye; and after a few preliminary casts to straighten the leader, the line shoots out and the fly drops like thistle-down at the base of the rock. There is a flash, a shimmer of silver, a quick strike, a mighty rush, and the

battle is on. Before you know it a hundred feet of line is out, and the reel is singing like an angry rattlesnake. The seven-ounce Leonard is bending like a willow in a storm, and the tough silk line is as taut as a harp-string. It has been dangerous up to this time to attempt to check, but now the butt is given; the rod is nearly a circle—the limit of bamboo endurance has nearly been reached, but not quite. A few short, savage jerks—more dangerous than the rush—and our enemy is out of the water, shaking his angry head and sending a shower of rain-drops from his glistening sides. "Quick! give him the tip." He splashes back into the river and changes his tactics. He will fight at closer range. But the nimble reel takes in the slack, and the taut line still holds him at the end of that springing arch. Another rush, another breach! "Mind that sunken rock; keep him away at all hazards. It will cut the leader like packthread." So!—well done, gallant fish! Now, for the landing net. "Steady there!" as he dodges it and is off again; but it is the flicker of expiring strength. He is taken out and laid, quivering and radiant, on the grassy bank. "A genuine rainbow," shouts Fred, "and a three-pounder at that!" He executes a *pas seul*, which is terminated by his suddenly sitting down in four feet of water. Ugh! it is icy. Joe drops his easel and paint-box and hurries to the rescue, and we pull our sputtering, shivering comrade ashore.

"Pity the landing net wasn't bigger; you would have given us less trouble," drawls Joe, sympathetically. Fred glares, but words are inadequate to the situation. We wait while he pours the water from his rubbers and wrings out his drenched clothing.

"And this is pleasure," resumes Joe, as we start a brisk walk to get Fred's blood into circulation. "This is pleasure to refined and cultivated man! Bah! talk of our boasted nineteenth century civilization; it is but the thinnest of

veneers. Scratch it, and you disclose the savage. I watched your faces while you were taking that fish—just before Fred took his seat," he laughs—"with curious psychological interest, and it occurred to me that I had never seen a more savage and relentless exhibition of remorseless cruelty. Had the fish given up at once and been pulled in like a log, there would have been no so-called fun in the transaction. It was the frantic efforts of your victim to escape that gave such zest to this humanitarian sport. So your principal ancestors must have glutted their bloody cruelty in the agonies of their dying human victims. Evolution still holds. You are savages at heart; you have but changed your skins."

"You blooming mass of sentimental bosh," ejaculates Fred, who by this time has warmed up, "you are at it again, are you? You will eat a part of this very fish to-night, without railing at the means of his capture. No, you will close your eyes and bless God that He has given you a good appetite and sound digestion and pass your plate for more. Does it hurt the fish more to be taken with a hook than in a net? Does it hurt the deer more to be killed by a bullet than it does the bullock to be slaughtered by an axe? Does your sentimental philosophy prevent you from tasting the juicy tenderloin, because of the bullock's awful taking off? My dear boy, you can talk more rot to the square inch than a bilious schoolmarm. What you call the remorseless cruelty of the fisherman does not spring from a depraved heart. It is the result of a combat in which intellect and skill are pitted against animal cunning. It is the spirit of fair play. It is an even chance whether you take your fish or he gets away. You do not use a net from which he has no chance to escape, but light tackle; and his strength and cunning are often more than a match for your superior knowledge and skill. The same is true of hunting. In the stimulation of energy and the uncertainty attendant

upon the result lie the fascination that draws man away from books and business into the Antæan embrace of mother earth, from which he rises as one refreshed with wine. Man is naturally a lazy animal, and the incentive that compels work must be strong. He doesn't climb mountains from the simple love of climbing, but to feed his love of the beautiful with the magnificent panorama unrolled about the summit, or to surmount some difficulty spiced with danger, or to get up where no one has been before, or in quest of the deer or bear. Give him a gun or rod, and he will see the sun rise, and drink in the pure air. He will 'lard the lean earth' in his pursuit of nature, and return with clearer eye, steadier nerve and restored courage to the battle of life."

"You may be right," says Joe, slowly, "but the divagations of Simon Peter have been resolved on different lines in the Berkeley Club."

And Shasta, from the summit of its ancient wisdom, looks down and smiles to think how human insects quarrel and fight, and fret out their little lives, away from the broader teachings and truer life of nature.

Our party has been increased. The Judge has just arrived, accompanied by two ladies, who have come to look after their nomadic husbands. Joe, miserable bachelor that he is, has no fears, and welcomes with effusive hospitality. As for Fred and myself, long experience has taught us how keen a woman's instinct for cleanliness is. We follow their searching gaze with a troubled diffidence, born, perhaps, of a natural apprehension. Much preparation had been made for the inspection. The kitchen utensils have been freshly scoured with sand. The commissary department had assumed a semblance of order. The blankets were hung out to air. A general all-around shake-up had resulted in so much discomfort that even the dogs protested and retired in disgust. Still we were doubtful. At length a soft voice speaks: "Well, Mary, it's not nearly so dirty as I expected to

see it. Really, the gentlemen deserve to be commended—but, dear me, we must straighten things up a bit." In half an hour the appearance of the camp has changed entirely. Three small tents have gone up, and, with a touch here and there, a bush removed at this point, and a small awning spread at another, order has come out of chaos. Exactly how it comes about we do not know—a man never can know; but there's such divinity doth hedge a woman's touch that disorder flees. The Judge invited Joe to share his tent; but that hardy campaigner rejected the proffered kindness with scorn. "What!" he exclaimed, "coop myself in canvas and destroy the weird effects of night? A tent is well enough for women, but man requires no other canopy than the over-arching branches of some tree to shield him from the dew. There he can lie rolled in his blankets through the solemn silence of the night, watch the march of the constellations, and realize that he is face to face with slumbering nature. When I was with the army at Newbern—" But there, there, there! That army-at-Newbern business had been ground into us so often that we rose up as one man and fell on the luckless soldier and bundled him and his blankets out of camp. It was only under the mollifying influence of a hearty supper that we consented to smoke the pipe of peace.

I was just dropping off to sleep when a gentle snore attracted my attention. It always does. There is about a snore a magnetism that is *sui generis*. It fascinates while it repels. It may be as soft as the breathing of an Æolian harp, but it is more potent as a promoter of sleeplessness than the roar of a twenty-stamp mill. If the noise were a constant quantity, one might sleep under the infliction. It is its intermittent character that arouses speculation and drives away sleep. One always finds himself, during the short intervals of quiet, wondering how long it will be before the next blast, and whether there will be any variation in

its note. It came from the direction of Fred's tent. Now, I knew that Fred did not snore. Was it possible that—but, no; ladies are never guilty of such a sin against rest. Come whence it did, it rubbed the poppy-juice from my drooping lids, and set me to watching with curious interest the fantastic shadows traced upon the wall of my tent by the swinging lantern without. Worn-out nature at length came to my rescue during a longer interval between the gentle raspings, and I slid off into dreamland, carrying with me the sights and sounds last imprinted on my senses. I was in the midst of a tornado, with the wreck of matter before my gaze. I was upon a railroad track, incapable of movement, with the headlight of an approaching locomotive full in my eyes. I was in the grasp of a California lion, and, as I lay helpless beneath his paw, he gave a yell so loud and fierce that I awoke with a start—to hear the rumbling of thunder, and a wrathful voice exclaim: "Are you fellows going to sleep forever? Hurry up, confound you, and bring the lantern. It's raining, and I can't find my shoes." I sprang up and threw on my clothes. It was raining, sure enough; I could hear the sharp pattering on the maple leaves. When Fred reached the artist, he was found crouched at the foot of a cedar and using the most intemperate language at our delay and his own inability to find certain articles of clothing thrown off upon retiring. Diligent search soon disclosed the missing remnants of his wardrobe; and when these were donned our shivering friend, literally, "took up his bed and walked" to the fire.

"Well, Joe," I said, from the safe vantage of the tent door, "for an old campaigner like yourself, this must be a treat. What recollections of Newbern it must arouse in you——" He turned on me savagely in silence and thrust his hand into his pocket. Now, there was nothing particularly alarming in this, *per se*, but his action was so

fierce and, to an old Californian, so suggestive, that I was momentarily disconcerted and, somehow, failed to complete my interesting remarks. I felt relieved, too, when he brought out his black briarwood and proceeded, in solemn silence, to load it.

By the way, had Fred heard any snoring? He had, but felt a delicacy about mentioning the matter, as he thought it had originated in my tent. Mutual explanation, amid much laughter, followed, and the music of the *nocturne* was finally brought home to one of the dogs. Would n't Joe now accept the Judge's invitation? No; Joe would see us hanged first; and, seated under the awning before a replenished fire, and draped in the blanket of his own solitude, we left the hero of Newbern to his military meditation.

In the days that followed we walked hand in hand with nature. The varnish of civilization was rubbed off, and the true strata of individual organism developed. Personal angularities were beveled. Selfishness surrendered to good nature, etiquette to comfort, and formality found herself an unwelcome visitor at the genial camp-table. We climbed the hills, explored hidden cañons, basked in the sun, lounged in cool shadows, and learned to interpret and love the "various language" in which nature speaks to the children of men. She led us step by step to the summits of her beauty, seduced us into the secret places of her hiding, and day by day revealed the arcana of her being. We were acolytes in the grand temple of the eternal. Our little valley no longer seemed a place of temporary residence, a starting-point for hunting, fishing and sketching parties. It was invested with subtle beauties, to which our eyes gradually opened. We watched it in the moonlight with fog-wisps curling from its bosom, at noontide when the trees stood listless and motionless in the blazing sun, and when cloud shadows crept across it. We stood in it

when the red light of evening bathed the landscape in its glow, and filled the air with flying gold.

Those days of mellow, golden hue—will their memories ever fade?

Our little party divided on lines of natural cleavage. The ladies cooked and sketched or hunted flowers and ferns with the artist. Fred and I looked after the game, while the Judge was *facile princeps* with the rod. Who of us will soon forget his hearty laugh, his genial face, his kindly nature? True-hearted gentleman, honest, kind, and wise, it will be long before we look upon his like again. He it was who discovered the until then unknown uses of the fern. It made an excellent wrapping for fresh-caught fish; but he did not confine his attention to the *Salmo fontinalis*—for, though handicapped by sixty years and two hundred pounds of "too, too solid flesh," he kept up with the best of us in the field. Who can remember without a smile that scene upon the hillside—a bubbling spring, a giant pine, the air pulsating with heat? The Judge removes a battered hat from his throbbing temples, carefully loosens the red bandana about his neck, and produces from a secret pocket a small wicker-covered flask, and slowly unscrews the top. We watch his actions with evident interest. He applies the flask to his lips, and a smile of serene satisfaction plays about the rugged lines of his sun-browned face. We draw nearer.

"Yes," he exclaims, "age has its necessities which," he continues, while his eye twinkles, "do not belong to youthful blood. A little—just a little, you know, boys, for the stomach's sake. St. Paul was an excellent man. His advice to Timothy should be taken with discrimination." And the flask slides back to its hiding-place.

At the camp-fire the Judge was at home. His reminiscences of the early days of mining life carried us into the heart of the Sierras when the flush days of '49 and '50

told of the fierce struggle for gold. Long tom and rocker, worked by nervous hands and watched by eager eyes, came forth at his bidding. Big Oak Flat, Grizzly Bar, and Rattlesnake Gulch lived again their lives of grim simplicity, gilded sin, and reckless lawlessness.

At the table his old-time courtliness put our feeble efforts to the blush.

"Another of those deliciously broiled birds, Madam Kitty," he would say as he passed his plate for the third time; or, "A little more of that magnificent venison stew, if you please, Madam Mary. Upon my word, you ladies excel in cooking. Such fare cannot be had at Demonico's." Whereat those misguided females would prance around the fire until their faces were as the rising sun, in their efforts to please so appreciative a guest. The rest of us were kindly invited to help ourselves.

But nomadic life, like all pleasure, must have an end. Its wealth must be tied in bundles and stored in the warehouse of memory, to be drawn thence and opened, one by one, at other times and other firesides. Recollection will usurp the place of reality, and we will laugh again over the mishaps of camp-life, grow enthusiastic over its pleasures, and live again with nature. But now, for a time at least, O kindly mother, we must say good-bye. Certain hints, incidentally let drop, set the ball in motion. A council of war is held. We return to-morrow. We take our last tramp; we eat our last dinner. The after-glow lights up the sky, then fades into night, and the stars come trooping from their hiding-places. Huge logs are piled upon the fire, and the flames shoot up. We sprawl upon the earth, each to his fancy. The sketches made during the day are brought forth and submitted to criticism. Joe examines them with artistic gravity. Aerial perspective, massing of shadows, high lights, fore-shortening, *et id omne genus* of artistic qualities are knowingly discussed by the

ladies. Fred and myself are inspired also to critical and discriminating suggestions, but are snubbed at the outset. What did we know about painting? Well, not much, it is true—but if this is intended for a cow, it certainly hails from an unknown breed; and how could anybody mistake this for a tree, or that for a road. The one looks like a hornet's nest in fine blossom; the other, a streak of mud. In addition—indignant sniffs are given over the ignorant presumption of *some* people, and we learn that the sketches are only "laid in." This relieves us, and we fall to discussing the events of the day, and detail at length the appropriate reasons for missing that last shot or for failing to land the largest fish of the season, at the "blue cut," just below Tunnel 10. We console the Judge for his loss with the remark that the fact that the largest fish always gets away is so universally acknowledged, that it has crystallized into a proverb; but the Judge refuses to be consoled in this manner. He is nettled by the imputation, and we are forced to listen again to the particulars of the fight and inspect the fragment of leader offered in evidence of its unfortunate result.

The ladies plead fatigue and retire early. They are deaf to our entreaties to stay and make a "howling" time of the last night in camp. We threaten them with dire revenge for their desertion, but to no purpose. There is the usual amount of chattering and suppressed laughter that attends the average female to bed; but at last the lantern is extinguished. Meanwhile we have not been idle. Apples are sizzling at the fire, the kettle is singing, the bottle of "snake antidote," hitherto untouched, is found, and the "gentleman from California" produces the requisite corkscrew. Under the delicate ministrations of the Judge, who we think has mistaken his calling, a steaming, fragrant, pulpy mixture is prepared and a libation poured to "Somnus, God of Sleep."

A feminine shriek comes from one of the tents, followed by excited exclamations. A spider, a "great, hairy spider," has just walked across the face of one of the ladies. A mighty threshing of pillows ensues, the enemy is dispatched and quiet reigns once more. The cup is again passed around, and the Judge grows positively eloquent with reminiscence. A low, steady breathing from the tents admonishes us that the time has arrived for putting into execution our scheme against sleep. We lift our voices in a stentorian war-whoop. The dogs bark, the horses snort, and two anxious faces appear at the tent doors.

"What was that?"

"Nothing but an owl, ladies," politely replies the artist.

"An owl, indeed!" with fine irony. Then, in great indignation, "Why don't you gentlemen go to sleep?" Plaintively, "We are so tired."

But the storm has broken. The Wild Huntsman is upon the camp, Tam O'Shanter rides to the music of the witches' shriek, while the gates of Valhalla swing inward to the thunder of the Valkyries' tread. Song and story follow each other in endless, chaotic confusion, and the revel waxes wilder and more furious as the moon wanes and the bowl is emptied.

A low but distinct and penetrating voice cuts the hideous uproar.

"Now, gentlemen, this thing has gone far enough. A joke is a joke; but, when it is carried beyond the limits of gentlemanly courtesy, it is time to put a stop to it."

We drop from the clouds and involuntarily turn to the Judge for assistance; but that wily jurist has disappeared. Joe mutters something about having to be up early in the morning, and vanishes in the darkness. Fred and I, at first, resolve to brazen it out; but the desertion of half our force, coupled with the recollection of the tone of authority in that gentle voice, and, mayhap, the pricking of our con-

sciences, deter us from this rash undertaking. We smoke in silence or converse in whispers and watch the fire die down.

"The last man up banks the fire!" Fred doubles himself up like a jackknife and shoots into his tent, and I am left alone with the dying fire. As I gaze into the glowing mass of flameless coals, I see other camp-fires at which I have sat and laughed and sung. Here is one on Mount Diablo, beneath Giant Moses Rock, from whose ribbed and ancient side a stream breaks forth. A sea of rolling vapor sweeps down the cañon at my feet, eddies around projecting promontories and breaks in foam on a rocky coast; long avalanches of mist slide down the distant ravines, while above, in the cloudless glory of the moon, the higher peaks rise like "golden islands floating on a silver sea." It is ghostly, this elemental warfare. It is the meeting of contending armies without the shock of battle, the fierce driving of a noiseless tempest, the rage of an ocean hurled upon a silent shore.

Another scene, and I am on the Monterey coast, vainly endeavoring to find shelter from the driving wind and whirling sand. Again, I am lying on the banks of the icy McCloud, gazing at the stars through the openings in the pines, my ears filled with the music of rushing waters.

The fire has burned through the heart of our noble back-log, and nothing but a thin membrane of bark holds the two great ends together. I wonder how long it will be before the insatiate element will decree an eternal divorce between them. Where shall we be a year hence? Shall we be together in camp? What has fate in store for us? "Even up on the red and white; five to one on the blue." The ball rolls and the game is lost or won. Who rolls the ball,

and where? Who stops it here, and why? Was old Omar right? Is it true that

"With earth's first clay they did the last man knead,
And there of the last harvest sowed the seed :
And the first morning of creation wrote
What the last dawn of reckoning shall read."

Blind follower of relentless fatalism! He did not know, nor do we. Yesterday is buried; to-day is ours to use and enjoy; beyond lie the gates of brass against which the human soul is ever flattening its nose in vain effort to find a peephole. Poor Peri! can you never realize that it is only when you free yourself from earth's clutch, your wings will bear you on that higher flight from which you can see?

Why indulge in idle questioning of futurity? Even it together, we cannot reproduce this camp. We may erect its skeleton and cover it with the garments of happy recollections; but we cannot clothe it with rosy flesh and breathe into it the life that is passing away on the wings of to-night.

The membrane snaps, and the ends roll apart. Grand old log, it has gone at last! Sparks fly upward and disappear. The fire smolders in dull smoke; the trees put on their darkest shadows; Shasta looks out from under its crown of stars, white, solemn, questioning, and the myriad voices of night sweep the soul as the strings of a harp.

EXPLORATIONS AMONG THE CAÑONS NORTH OF THE TUOLUMNE RIVER.

BY N. F. McCLURE,

First Lieutenant Fifth Cavalry.

On August 18, 1894, I left the cavalry camp near Wawona, California, with a detachment of the Fourth U. S. Cavalry, consisting of twelve men and five pack-mules, with rations for twelve days, to scout for sheepmen, who were reported to be unusually thick in the vicinity of Tuolumne Meadows. On the afternoon of the second day I camped at that place. In the course of a conversation with Mr. Lambert, who resides there during the summer, I learned that he was in possession of a description of a route to Lake Eleanor by way of the cañons north of the Tuolumne River. At my request, he wrote this out in condensed form from a book which he had, the whole covering two-thirds of a sheet of legal-cap paper. This country was then unknown to me, and I had heard that it was one of excessive ruggedness, which a few sheep-herders and prospectors only had ever visited. I afterwards learned that First Sergeant Alvin Arndt, Troop "I," Fourth Cavalry, with a detachment of his troop, had crossed from Slide Cañon to Tiltill Valley in September, 1893, over a region of great roughness, and that he had found out from sheepmen that there was a route from Matterhorn Cañon to Hetch-Hetchy Valley, by keeping on the high ground between Rancheria Creek and the Tuolumne River.

Equipped with Mr. Lambert's directions and a copy of

the map of the Sierra Club, I set forth on the morning of August 20th, on the Conness Trail. One mile northwest brought us to a small stream called Delaney Creek, and one mile and a quarter west of this we crossed Dingley Creek, where our trail forked. That to Mount Conness turned north, and was quite plain. The other, which I was to follow, was indicated in direction by an arrow pointing west; and, after searching about for a while, I discovered the blazes, beginning at a point about four hundred yards from the fork. In about a mile and a quarter we came to a large bare granite spot, over which the trail led; and a mile beyond this, to a bluff overlooking Conness Creek Cañon. A series of zigzags down this for three-fourths of a mile brought us to the stream below, Conness Creek, at the place where its left fork joins it, which latter is also called Alkali Creek. There was a meadow of good size here, and I availed myself of it by going into camp.

I had already sent a corporal and three men up the Conness Trail to look for sheep; and I now sent two men south on the same errand, while I, with three men, started up the west side of Alkali Creek on the trail of a pack-train which had turned back up that stream upon my approach, about an hour before. I suspected that the two men with it belonged to some party of sheep-herders, and that they were going back to warn some of their friends in charge of flocks near by.

The trail was plain, and, following rapidly up the creek for four miles, I reached a pretty meadow of eight or ten acres, upon which I found the enemy's pack-animals grazing. The two men were apparently asleep. I passed right on, as though not looking for them, and, in a half mile, crossed a grassy divide into the basin of a large stream which flows from Conness Mountain westward into Return Cañon. I scouted the upper part of this basin pretty thoroughly, and saw plenty of fresh "signs," but no sheep.

Four hours found me again back with the pack-train of the sheepmen ; but one of the packers had gone away on foot, in all probability to warn herders near by of our proximity. This suspicion was confirmed by the appearance of a dog about five hundred yards from us, which, as soon as it saw us, fled. Leaving one man in charge of our prisoner (for I now arrested the man), we searched the vicinity of the meadow for a radius of a mile, in the hope of finding sheep, but in vain. It was now getting late ; so I made my prisoner pack up his train, and took him, his animals and his outfit back to my camp. There I found that my corporal had "bagged" three herders, and, from the animated conversation that now took place between his prisoners and mine, I saw that they were far from being strangers to one another. Next morning I sent a detachment up Alkali Creek, another to the scene of the capture of the three herders the day before, and a third, consisting of the corporal and two men, to take my four prisoners to Wawona. I accompanied the latter south over a pretty rough country to the Tioga road, which I struck at a point about three and one-half miles north of Lake Tenaya. I then returned alone by way of Mr. Lambert's to my camp.

On August 22d I started for Return Cañon, depending mostly on the "lay" of the country, since I could find but few traces left of the old Virginia Trail. I followed up Alkali Creek about two miles, and then struck almost due north, crossing the ridge between the two cañons diagonally, and finally, after many tacks and zigzags, getting down into Return Cañon at the point where it receives the large tributary from the east, whose upper basin I had explored two days before. Following up the main stream two miles, I suddenly came upon two good-sized flocks of sheep. The herders fled up into the rocks, and we were unable to capture them ; so I had one or two shots fired to frighten them. I do not think that they have stopped run-

ning yet. We found two camps near by, with all the accouterments pertaining thereto; and these, together with four fine jacks, I secured and brought into my own camp, which I made on a meadow near by.

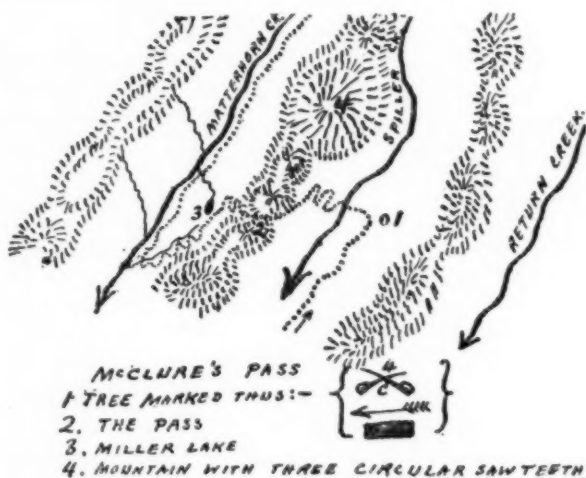
That afternoon my sergeant and I went up the cañon five miles and turned to the right through a saddle between two red peaks, which are part of the main chain of the Sierras. Right on top of the divide is Castle Lake, a beautiful body of water, one-half mile long and very deep, fed by everlasting snow. This lake is the head waters of Green Creek, and is about one mile south of the north boundary of the reservation. At this time I saw no way of getting down into Green Creek Cañon. On August 23d I sent patrols from camp up and down Return Cañon. There were thousands of sheep running hither and thither, apparently abandoned by their herders. Fresh mutton was plentiful in our camp during the next few days. I ascended again to Castle Lake, and discovered a trail leading down Green Creek. Following this one-third of a mile, I discovered where the old Virginia Trail turned off sharp to the right up the hill for two hundreds yards to two small snow lakes, and then climbed for a half mile up a steep bluff to the divide between the head waters of Green Creek and those of Virginia Creek, from which divide the upper basin of the latter stream can be seen. By going about half a mile to the left of the pass, on the ridge leading out to a large red mountain called Dunderberg Peak, a fine view of Green Creek Cañon can be obtained. By ascending the ridge dividing the head waters of Virginia Creek from those of Mill Creek or Lundy Cañon, another good view is found. To the east is Mono Lake. Three miles to the southeast is a large red peak, Mount Warren, up whose steep sides, from a dark gorge below, a trail zigzagged, ascending cliffs that seemed well-nigh impassable, and finally disappearing near the top of the mountain. This trail was that from

Lundy to Tioga, and it passes over the very summit of Mount Warren, at an altitude of 12,000 feet.

At my feet lay several little lakes fed by melting snowbanks, the waters of which, finally uniting into a respectable stream, tumbled over the rocks into a deep gorge, which I judged to be Lundy Cañon, and from which the trail mentioned above started upward.

On August 24th, I sent Sergeant Girdwood, with one man, to Tuolumne Meadows to meet fresh supplies that I expected, while I, with the remainder of the command, descended Return Cañon to the mouth of Spiller (or Randall) Cañon. Turning up this and keeping on the left-hand side of the stream, a stiff climb of a mile and a quarter brought us to where the cañon was comparatively open, and about a mile beyond this we found an old sheep corral. I afterward learned that there was a route from this to Matterhorn Cañon, but did not look for one at this time, as my directions from Mr. Lambert led me to believe that the only passage-way was to be found at the extreme northern end of the cañon. About five miles above the corral we came to a little lake, at the very head of the stream, fed by a melting snowbank. A few yards above the lake was the divide, beyond which lay Mono County, and a search of two hours over this divide, and on both sides of it, failed to reveal any signs of a way by which to leave the cañon with our animals. It was with the bitterest disappointment that I again turned my horse's head southward—for I felt that my directions having failed me here, I could no longer depend upon them. After traveling three and one-half miles I camped. One mile north of me was a high peak which has on its summit three jagged spurs, which appear, as you advance up the cañon, like the teeth of a gigantic circular saw, except that the left-hand one is the largest and the right-hand one smallest. After a good meal I felt better, and was lying on my bedding, resting, when all at once, as my

eyes were scanning the side of the great backbone that separated me from Matterhorn Cañon, I thought that I saw a place where a way to ascend might be found. Up I sprang and away I went to investigate. There was sparse timber scattered among the rocks, and I began to pick out a possible route; but it was all in vain. Each time I would come to some impassable obstacle and have to hunt for another path. I finally went up on top of the backbone and got a fine view of the surrounding country.



To the southwest, and about half a mile away, on a little plateau, probably over a thousand feet above Matterhorn Creek, lay a little lake surrounded by a small meadow. I now started along the ridge in a southwestern direction, keeping near the summit, and searching for a possible cleft or saddle through which animals might be taken. After going perhaps a quarter of a mile, I suddenly came upon the most remarkable natural pass that I ever beheld. A long, narrow cleft ran nearly east and west diagonally across

the divide. It was about four hundred yards long, and considerable soil had collected in it, thus affording fine footing for horses. Investigating the west end of this, I soon discovered that I could get down to the little lake seen from above. It now remained to see whether I could find a practicable route from the east end of the pass to camp. I started for the bottom, hunting out a pathway as I went and marking it with little piles of stones; but I thought at the time that I should be obliged to build a trail over a few of the worst places. I returned to camp just at dusk, well pleased with my afternoon's work. Next morning we started bright and early, and after two hours of hard work reached the summit. As I had predicted, I had to build up pieces of trail in several places. I now left a man to watch for Sergeant Girdwood, whom I expected, and continued on down to the small lake, which was half a mile from the divide. There being a meadow here, I remarked to a soldier who was with me, a little in advance of the others, that it would be a good place to camp. I then went down alone for seven or eight hundred feet into the cañon, looking for a place to get the animals to the stream below. I confess that I did not like the outlook, as the slope was very great, and only a few inches of loose sand covered smooth granite rocks inclining at an angle of thirty degrees or more. I returned to the lake, and imagine my surprise to find the detachment in camp, horses unsaddled, mules unpacked, and the cook-fire blazing merrily away. The man to whom I had spoken about camping had taken my remark about its being a good camping-place in real earnest, and had told the others that my orders were to stay there until next day. His name was Miller, and, naming the lake in honor of him, I decided to remain there until the next morning. I spent the afternoon searching for a way of descent, and found one that turned to the left of the lake over a little ridge into a cañon, which it followed

down about a mile in a southwestern direction to the bottom of the main cañon.

That evening my sergeant arrived with six more men, five fresh pack-mules, and eighty-five rations. I now had with me nine pack-mules (one having been sent back with the men who took the prisoners to Wawona), fifteen men, and about one hundred and fifty rations. Sergeant Girdwood had brought news of sheep in the vicinity of Bloody Cañon; so I decided to divide my party. Next morning I took seven men, the five mules and the seven horses that were best shod, and about eighty rations, and sent the sergeant with the remainder of the command to Bloody Cañon. A mile of zigzagging down the path that I had selected the day before brought me to Matterhorn Creek, up which I turned with high hopes. The route now led for five miles through little meadows on each side of the stream, until a comparatively low saddle was seen to the left of us and near the head of the cañon. Investigating this, I found it was a natural pass. The scenery here was truly sublime. I doubt if any part of the main chain of the Sierras presents a greater ruggedness than that portion along whose slopes Matterhorn and Slide Cañon Creeks find their sources. Going through the saddle, our route now lay over a little glacier down to the stream starting from its foot. We were here on the head waters of Rancheria Creek; but I did not know it at the time. This stream rises among a number of glaciers (the one we crossed being one of these), and for a number of miles is called Slide Cañon. Later it becomes Deep Cañon Creek, and still beyond this Rancheria Creek, leaping into the upper end of Hetch-Hetchy Valley as a stream of considerable size.

After traveling three and one-half miles down the cañon, I came to the most wonderful natural object that I ever beheld. A vast granite cliff, two thousand feet in height,

had literally tumbled from the bluff on the right-hand side of the stream with such force that it had not only made a mighty dam across the cañon, but many large stones had rolled far up on the opposite side. As it fell it had evidently broken into blocks, which were now seen of almost every size, piled one upon another in the wildest confusion. The smaller particles had settled between the crevices, leaving great holes among the larger blocks, some of which weighed many tons. To look at it, one might think that it had occurred but yesterday; but it was, in all probability, ages ago, as the ground just above the slide is two hundred feet or more higher than that just below, showing that earth has accumulated on the upper side for many years. Above the slide was a very small lake and a meadow of five acres, and I concluded to camp here. The flocks of sheep were near by, and I gave the herders warning not to come farther down, as I believed the line of the north boundary of the Park to be about where I was.

That afternoon I scouted down stream four miles to a place where the walls of the cañon closed in on the stream. There was a waterfall here of probably one hundred feet, and I could not get my horses farther. After returning to camp, one of the herders came to me, and I explained to him that I would let him "go in peace" if he would show me the way to Jack Main's Cañon. He said that the only man who knew the way had decamped upon my approach, and was now hidden. I told him to hunt the fellow up; and, after a search (real or pretended) of three hours, he was found. He was a very willing man—very different from the average Portuguese or Basque sheepman—and would have been an invaluable guide had he not had a serious impediment of speech. This, combined with his strong foreign accent, made much of his talk unintelligible to me. He said that he knew the way to Jack Main's Cañon; but I could not find out whether he knew of either

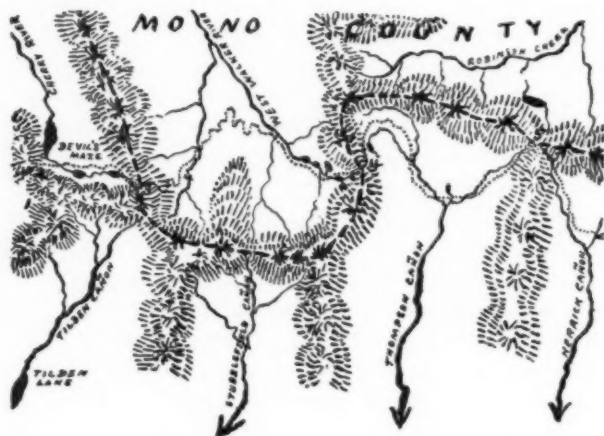
Lake Vernon or Lake Eleanor, as he seemed not to recognize these names. August 28th we started, our guide in the lead; and, working up the hillside to the left of the great slide, we were enabled, after going about one-third of a mile, to get down again into the cañon.



About a mile and a half below the slide, my guide suddenly turned sharp to the right and began to work up what seemed to be, from below, an impassable cliff, the rocks being bare and steep, with here and there a few scattered tamarack trees and bunches of willows. After going up perhaps a hundred feet, the trail suddenly turns into a seam running up the side of the bluff in the direction of the head of the main cañon. This seam, or inclined ledge, can scarcely be noticed from below; but it is in reality about

forty feet wide, and has caught enough soil and debris to make it quite good footing. We led our horses up this place, as is always my custom in a rough country. A stiff climb of a mile, and we came out upon a plateau where there was quite a meadow, and I think there was a small lake a few hundred yards further on in the midst of the meadow. When I speak of the trail here, I really refer to a sheep walk, with once in a great while a pile of stones to mark the route. There was no well-defined pathway; and one going over this country must travel more or less by the great cañons, which correspond, in a rough way, to the streets of a mighty city. This is the case all the way from Alkali Creek to Jack Main's Cañon. We passed along the southern edge of the meadow, and then bore directly toward the south side of an irregular butte about a mile away. We went close to the foot of this, keeping it on our right, and soon came down into a little cañon, which we crossed. Then we passed over the ridge and down into a second cañon very similar to the preceding one, and running nearly parallel with it. These two cañons I named "The Twin Cañons." They are each about three miles long, and unite probably a mile below where I crossed them, and then join Rock Cañon, a mile beyond. Leaving the second of "The Twins," we crossed another small divide, from which we could see a large lake, a mile in length. A stream headed three miles above this, and flowing down into and through the lake, finally disappeared to the southward in a narrow cañon which appeared to join Kerrick Cañon several miles below. I named the stream Rock Creek, and the lake Rock Island Lake, from a large granite island that was visible near the northern end. A descent of a few hundred yards brought us to the lake, and, following up the east bank of this a short distance, we forded the stream coming in at the northern end, and, turning up the cañon, soon came to a saddle to the left of us on the ridge

dividing Rock Cañon from the next to the west. Passing through this gap we were in Kerrick Cañon, near its head waters. The main stream is formed by three branches uniting near together. We followed down the east fork for a mile or more, and then up the west fork for a mile and a half, which brought us out on the main crest of the Sierras. Here one can obtain a fine view of the upper basin of what I thought to be Robinson Creek, in Mono County. A lake a mile long, and fifteen hundred feet below, drained into this stream.



FROM KERRICK TO JACK MAIN'S
CAÑON

- 1 JACK MAIN'S LAKE 2 PASS INTO JACK MAIN'S CAÑON
3 PASS FROM WEST WALKER BASIN INTO WHAT I TOOK TO BE
CHERRY RIVER BASIN. 4 PASS FROM THOMPSON CAÑON TO WEST
WALKER BASIN. 5 PASS FROM KERRICK TO THOMPSON CAÑON

The west fork of Kerrick Creek, which we had just left, lies to the south, while to the west is the east fork of Thompson Creek, down which our route now led for a mile and a quarter. The main stream, which is on the south side of the crest of the Sierras, is formed by the uniting of

two branches; and we now turned up the western one. About a half mile further this stream subdivides into two brooks, and the trail goes right up the point between the two for about three-fourths of a mile and then turns sharp to the left above a small lake two hundred yards to the left of our path. A few hundred yards farther and we were in a pass on the main crest of the Sierra Nevada, and a portion of Mono County, which we were now for the first time to enter, lay before us. Looking to the west across this, one could see two extremely rough cañons coming together about five miles to the northwest. One of these headed at our feet, and contained half a dozen little lakes, while the other headed about three miles in an air line to the west. Between the two a long, rugged granite point shot out from the main crest. My first impression in looking across this region was that it would be impossible to get animals over to a gap high up on the main crest beyond the second cañon, which our guide now pointed out to us as being the pass by which we were to return to the southwestern slopes of the Sierras in Tuolumne County. To our left, as we looked toward this pass, was the main range, studded with high, jagged peaks and curving gradually around like an enormous amphitheater, until it reached the saddle through which we were to go, and then extending miles to the northwest. Many snowbanks, and even glaciers, lay along the northern slopes, and from these hundreds of rivulets trickled and tumbled into the two main cañons, cutting the declivities in the most fantastic manner into innumerable arroyos and minor cañons, and making the terrane one of extreme roughness for animal travel. We followed down the east cañon past the little lakes for two miles, and then left the stream and began to work gradually over and up the rocky point above mentioned, picking our way slowly amongst the boulders and ravines, with an occasional rock pile here and there to mark the route. We finally got into

the west cañon, and, traveling up this for a mile, came to a high cascade. Here we turned to the right and worked up the side of the ridge in a westerly direction, leaving the falls behind us. Two low places, a few hundred yards apart, were now seen to the front, and, after a very rough climb of perhaps half a mile, we passed through the left of these, and were in Tuolumne County and again on the south side of the main crest. All of the travel in Mono County was very rough; and it is my belief that I here crossed the head waters of West Walker River, but I am not sure. We were now, I think, at the source of Cherry River. To the left of us, as we faced west, a long black ridge, almost as rugged as the main range and nearly as high, extended to the west as far as we could see; and our guide, who was to leave us here, pointed out to me a low place in this ridge which was about three miles away, and was the pass leading into the head of Jack Main's Cañon. Three lakes lay between us and the pass, which we were two hours in reaching; and long before we got there I wished that I had kept our guide a little longer. It looked so easy when we started; but we wound around and around among jagged volcanic rocks, now and then coming to a perpendicular wall ten or fifteen feet high, and having to retrace our steps. I called this little piece of trail the "Devil's Maze." My recollection is that we passed to the right of the first and second lakes and to the left of the third and largest, from which we turned sharp to the left, and, going through the pass, were in Jack Main's Cañon. Half a mile below us lay a large, long lake, which is called Jack Main's Lake. It was almost dark when we got down to this, and I immediately camped. Grazing here was poor, and there had evidently been thousands of sheep about. In fact, there were two flocks visible from my camp. To add to our discomfort, a thunder shower set in and gave us something of a wetting. We were now on the head waters of Fall River,

which flows southwest through Lake Vernon and finally leaps over the bluff into lower Hetch-Hetchy, making one fall at low water, but dividing at high water and making two.

Next day I marched six miles down stream, on the right-hand side, to good grass, and camped. At this point there is a large, round peak on the left of, and rising about two thousand feet above, the river; and the stream here widens out into a hole three hundred yards long, fifty wide, and very deep. During this day the march had taken us through another of the great wonders of this region, namely, the "Dead Forest." From Jack Main's Lake to the enlargement of the river, the cañon is very broad, and covered with tamarack trees, almost every one of which is dead. The reason for this unusual freak of nature I do not know.

In the afternoon I ascended the high peak, and from its summit obtained a magnificent view. The main cañon was visible from a point two miles below its head to a large lake eight miles away, which I afterwards found to be Lake Vernon. To the northeast were the rugged spurs to the north of which I had passed the day before while traveling in Mono County, and between me and them was a cañon, probably five miles in length, at the lower end of which lay a lake, one and one-half miles long and one-half mile wide. This was Tilden Lake, and the stream flowing into it was Tilden Cañon Creek, which left the lake at the foot of the mountain on which I stood, and curved around its base, falling into Jack Main's Cañon, in a series of cataracts, a half mile below. To the east of the lake, a long ridge extended from the main crest in a southwesterly direction to a large butte, or mountain, east of Lake Vernon, which I afterwards found was Mount Gibson. A high ridge, very rugged and steep, divided Jack Main and Tilden Cañons, while another extended along the west side of the former cañon until it finally ended in the high ground west of

Lake Vernon. Almost west of me, on a plateau probably eight hundred feet above the main cañon, and two miles away, lay another large and, apparently, very shallow lake. I had a compass with me, and took many bearings; so that these objects are pretty accurately located. When I returned to camp, one of my men, Branigan, who had been down the trail for four miles, reported that, about two miles below, the bluffs closed in on the river, and the traveling became extremely rough. He also reported that the main stream disappeared into the ground about four miles below. I did not believe this at the time, thinking him mistaken, but found afterwards that the river did in reality pass through a tunnel for a distance of three or four hundred yards. I was sorry that my limited time did not allow of my making a thorough examination of this wonderful curiosity; and I hope that some of the readers of this will be able to visit this tunnel in the near future, and give us a complete description of it.

On August 30th we marched two miles, through meadows, down the river, and then reached a point where it was pretty rough. A mile below this, I crossed the stream to the east side, hunting for better ground; and, in half a mile, came to a lake, the size of Lake Vernon, hidden away in a cove in the wall of the gorge, and draining into the river, which flows about one hundred yards away. I was obliged to re-cross to the west side just below the lake; and, to any one traveling this route, I will say that it is best never to cross the river after once leaving Jack Main's Lake, at the head of the cañon, but to keep on the west side. Three or four small lakes were passed during the next eight miles. This part of the route was extremely tedious, and thoroughly tried the patience of all. The river winds like a snake down the gorge, making numerous horseshoe bends. At almost every western curve a rocky point, ending in a "jump-off," came down to the stream; and lying in each

corresponding eastern bend would be a small meadow, interspersed with tamarack and willows. The trail generally led across these meadows, and over the rocky points; and it was at the latter places that we had the greatest difficulty in following it. A few scattering piles of stones would sometimes mark it, but we depended mainly on the horse-dung, which occurred at frequent intervals. This was due to the travel over the trail, and also to the fact that some rancher had a good many horses scattered along the river, and these, in traveling from one meadow to another, made use of the only practicable route, viz., the trail. In many places the travel was so rough that it seemed impossible to pass, but the rough granite rocks gave good footing to the animals, and we arrived in sight of what I took to be the meadow north of Lake Vernon, without injury to a single horse or mule. By climbing up the side of the cañon two hundred yards, I could see the lake about a mile to the south. From this point the river plunged, in a series of cataracts, to the low ground above the lake, and we could follow it no further.

How to get out of the cañon was a problem that at first startled me, as I saw in it visions of taking the back track; but a solution was found in a narrow gorge to our right, which joined the main cañon at this point. Up this a trail led, but it was so badly washed and so thickly overgrown with brushwood that it took us two hours to make it passable. Ascending this gorge for half a mile, we soon came out on the ridge to the west of Lake Vernon, and following this a little west of south brought us in two miles to the McGill-Vernon Trail at a point about three miles southwest of the lake. Two miles nearly west on this trail took us to "The Beehive," a fenced meadow belonging to McGill, into which we turned our tired stock after making camp.

Next day we proceeded five miles southwest to McGill's, where I again camped. In the afternoon I visited Lake

Eleanor, four miles to the northwest, returning before night to my camp. The ranch belongs to Mr. Miguel D. Errera, but his American friends have corrupted *Miguel* into *McGill* and by that name is his house known. Trails lead from this point to Lake Vernon, Lake Eleanor, Hetch-Hetchy, and the Hog Ranch, via Poopenaut Valley. I took the last



VICINITY OF LAKE VERNON

of these on September 1st, and camped at Ackerson's. September 2d I proceeded to the Yosemite Valley, and the 3d found me again in Wawona, after an absence of seventeen days and a most enjoyable trip in the mountains. In conclusion, I will say that almost every sheep-herder has a different name for each of the great cañons north of the Tuolumne River, and this may prove in future a stumbling-block to those wishing to visit this region. *One should never forget that the name he hears spoken may be associated in the mind of his interlocutor with a totally*

different place from what it is in his own mind. In a map which I am preparing of this part of the National Park, I hope to remove much of the confusion existing on this subject, by naming the most prominent features.

From Jack Main's Cañon to where I left the Fall River, north of Lake Vernon, there is more or less of a trail; but if one keep always on the west side in coming down, he will be able to get through, though not without hard work. From Tuolumne Meadows to Lake Eleanor there is generally no trouble in finding grazing. All the cañons south of the main chain of the Sierras have been hollowed out broad and deep near their heads, by the pressure of great ice fields, and here are found beautiful meadows. Probably, at no point in the world can the glacial action of the ages past be so well studied as in these numerous valleys. I have been told that there is a good route from what I have called Thompson Cañon to Tiltill Valley. This would be a better journey for any one desiring to remain within the Park limits than the one which I describe in this paper. There are also the two routes to which I referred in the beginning of this narrative as having been discovered by First Sergeant Alvin Arndt, Troop "I," Fourth Cavalry.

On the trail which I followed, that part from Rock Island Lake to the mountain which I climbed in Jack Main's Cañon, is probably outside the limits of the Yosemite National Park.

The best time to visit this region is probably the month of August.

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